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# Foreign Language Anxiety Among Japanese International Students in the U.S.

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FOREIGN LANGUAGE ANXIETY AMONG JAPANESE INTERNATIONAL
STUDENTS IN THE U.S.

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# FOREIGN LANGUAGE ANXIETY AMONG JAPANESE INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN THE U.S.

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This study aims to investigate the foreign language anxieties Japanese

international students at American universities have and the relationship between these

anxieties and length of stay in the U.S. 151 Japanese international students answered a

modified version of the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (Horwitz, Horwitz &

Cope, 1986) followed by demographic questions. The findings from the questionnaire

were analyzed through SPSS 21 software. Results indicated a statistically significant

relationship between students' level of anxieties and the length of stay in the U.S.

Implications for teachers and government officials in Japan, as well as for teachers and

university administrators in the U.S., are discussed.

# Introduction

Foreign language anxiety has long been studied as a factor that influences the acquisition of a foreign language. Classroom instructors often hear students say that they understand what an instructor says and what they are supposed to say, but they freeze when asked to speak in the target language. On the other hand, there has been a move toward Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) as the primary method of foreign language instruction. CLT aims at teaching students how to speak rather than teaching them how to analyze language. Japan is not an exception to this move. The Japanese government has tried to change its reading-centered approach to a communication-centered approach for more than two decades (Tahira, 2012). However, the traditional reading-centered approach has not changed drastically, despite the government's policy to abandon it. This is because the university entrance examination focuses on reading and grammar. However, the government recently has summoned a special committee to plan a new type of English language instruction (Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, 2013). This committee has taken the position that English is to be the primary language that is used in English classrooms—a position which the Japanese government supports (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports and Technology, 2013). This is a first step in enabling students to speak fluently. However, previous research has highlighted the necessity of considering foreign language classroom anxiety in order to make communication-oriented teaching successful (Sağlamel & Kayaoğlu, 2013; Suwantarathip & Wichadee, 2010). In addition to implementing CLT, the Japanese government is also trying to foster more English-language fluency by promoting study abroad (Cabinet Secretariat, 2014). However, it is one thing to go and study abroad, yet it

is another thing to acquire the language and learn content in it. It seems the government, policy makers and university administrators presume that going abroad automatically equips students with English language proficiency. On the contrary, language acquisition is a cognitive activity that requires a process of encoding and retrieving what is stored, which anxiety could interfere with (MacIntyre, 1995). Thus, although the length of time could positively affect their anxiety level, if international students who study abroad feel the same anxieties that foreign language students in Japan have, it is unlikely that they will acquire the language skills that they, as well as the government officials and university administrators who send them abroad, originally thought they could attain. If so, there will be room for improvement in classroom activities while students are in Japan, and in U.S.-based programs that serve Japanese students.

**Literature Review of Japanese EFL Students' Anxiety**

In the field of foreign language anxiety study, the cornerstone is Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope's (1986) *Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale*. After carrying out extensive student-based empirical research, they concluded that foreign language anxiety consisted of three elements: (1) communicative apprehension, (2) test anxiety and (3) fear of negative evaluation. Communicative apprehension includes anxieties related to communication, such as speaking and listening. This problem is often derived from the knowledge that they have problems in understanding and making themselves understood when they have limited linguistic knowledge. Test anxiety is a category that is related to a fear of failure when taking assessments, which is not necessarily particular to language learning. Finally, fear of negative evaluation includes anxieties that are triggered whenever people are evaluated by others, such as in job interview settings. In particular, Horwitz et al. (1986) has suggested that what makes foreign language anxiety different from other learning anxieties is the fact that it is related to self-esteem, which would not be threatened as long as students speak in their first language. Namely, foreign language learners feel vulnerable because, in a foreign language, they cannot present what they can do in their mother tongue due to their limited linguistic ability. Horwitz (2001) also has pointed out that language anxiety is essential in understanding how learners deal with language learning, their likelihood of success and failure, and if they continue to study or not.

In addition to Horwitz et al. (1986), Young (1991) is another figure who classified language anxiety variables. These six types of anxiety variables in foreign language classrooms are: (1) personal and interpersonal anxieties, (2) learner beliefs about

language learning, (3) instructor beliefs about language teaching, (4) instructor-learner interactions, (5) classroom procedures, and (6) language testing. Some of them overlap with Horwitz et al.'s (1986) FLCAS, but her categorization gives a meaningful insight into what to consider in studying foreign language anxiety.

Based on the work of these authors, foreign language anxiety research has gained attention and has been conducted in the context of English classrooms in Japan, mainly among university students. These studies and those carried out in other settings have focused on its content, types of classroom activities associated with it, and its relationship to overseas experience, personality, and culture. Below is an overview of the key studies conducted up to this point.

Burden (2004) discovered the types of foreign language anxieties shared by Japanese college students in English classrooms by using Horwitz et al.'s (1986) FLCAS. More than half of the 289 students reported speaking related anxiety such as "I do not feel sure of myself when I speak in English," "I start to panic if I am called upon to speak without having prepared in advance," "I feel frightened when I do not understand what the teacher says in English," and "I would be nervous when speaking English with native speakers of that language," as well as foreign language classroom related anxiety, such as "It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in English class," and "I worry about the consequences of failing my English class." The most important finding of this study, however, was that it demonstrated that foreign language anxiety also existed among Japanese students who studied English in Japan. He also points out that, by recognizing students' feelings of incompetence, teachers can create a more

comfortable and low-anxiety classroom with pair and group work that would foster cooperation among students instead of tension.

Williams and Andrade (2008) identified the situations that provoked anxiety among Japanese university in EFL classes. They asked 243 students to write about anxiety-provoking situations they had encountered and then categorized those situations into three stages of the language-learning process: input, output and processing. As a result, they found output and processing made up the 75% of all the anxiety-provoking situations students identified. In addition, they also found that half of the students perceived teachers as the cause of those anxiety provoking situations, suggesting the need for considering improving student-teacher relationships.

The above research suggests that there is foreign language classroom anxiety among Japanese students, and that there is a room for improvement on the part of teachers in terms of their instructional methods and ways of responding to students' output and reaction. In order to know more about the complex system of foreign language anxiety, there needs to be an investigation of the factors that make students feel anxious in the classroom. Osboe, Fujimura and Hirschel (2007) found that neither overseas experience-- although they defined overseas experience as over two weeks-- nor second language (L2) proficiency contributed to speaking confidence; instead, lower proficiency level students were more comfortable speaking with others. In addition, they pointed out that overall, students preferred pair and group work to whole class activities, reflecting their communication apprehension anxiety regarding speaking in front of others.

On the other hand, Matsuda and Gobel (2004) conducted a study to investigate if overseas experience had an effect on the anxiety among Japanese college students

majoring in English by using various instruments, the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (Horwitz et al., 1986) among them. The students' overseas experience was 97 days on average, ranging two weeks to five years. Through this study, they found that having overseas experience had a significant effect on the students' answers to the FLCAS. However, they reported that a difference was not seen among the length of stay in a foreign country and their answers on the FLCAS. In addition, they conducted an analysis to investigate predicting factors that predicted classroom performance. They found that items in FLCAS about anxiety, which are not necessarily relevant to the classroom setting, were a significant predictor for the success of English courses.

While Osboe , Fujimura and Hirschel's study (2007) showed a positive relationship among students' personality, status as extrovert or introvert, and first language (L1) speaking confidence, Ohata (2005) pointed out that being an extrovert in the L1 did not have a strong influence in L2 speaking confidence from his interview-based research with Japanese students who studied in the U.S. Ohata (2005) suggested cultural differences between North American and Japanese cultures were the cause of anxiety. He cites a student that reported that he or she felt anxious about becoming more assertive in the classroom, even though he or she knew that is the norm in America, because it was not the way they had been raised. Similarly, Leeming (2011) pointed out a type of anxiety that was particular to the Japanese culture. That is an idea of "*deru kui wa utareru,*" meaning the nail that sticks up gets hammered down. Both of these studies pointed out the fact that good students tried to adjust to other students because there is a social atmosphere that discourages them from standing out from other students.

Although most of the research on students' anxiety in foreign language classrooms has been conducted in Japan, Ohata (2005) conducted interviews to explore how Japanese students who studied in the U.S. felt foreign language anxiety. In these interviews, he found five commonalities among the participants: (1) fear of negative evaluation; (2) lack of self-confidence in the English proficiency; (3) competitiveness, meaning they compared their English ability with other Japanese students; (4) test anxiety; and (5) cultural differences, meaning they were perplexed sometimes when they had to behave differently from the norm they had grown up with. In addition, Hashimoto (2002) investigated the relationship among students' perceived competence, motivation to speak the L2 and the frequency of the L2 use in a study of Japanese college students in Hawaii. She pointed out that L2 anxiety had a strong and negative influence on students' perceived competence, which led students to speak the L2 less.

As has been demonstrated, foreign language anxiety exists among Japanese students, and it is thought that there is not only one variable that influence the anxiety. One task of foreign language teachers need is to create an environment to reduce students' anxiety in order to optimize their learning by understanding their mental states. Recognizing the existence of foreign language classroom anxieties necessitates investigating if teaching methods can change students' level of foreign language classroom anxiety. One of the practices presented is a method of creative drama (Sağlamel & Kayaoğlu, 2013). The authors conducted a study to investigate if students' anxiety levels in EFL classrooms could be reduced by the implementation of a drama-centered method, which included four steps in one session: warm-ups, pantomimes, improvisation/role plays and evaluation. Participants were students of an English

program at a Turkish university who had anxiety in English classrooms. During the six weeks which the study took place, pre and posttests of students' anxiety in the language classroom were examined using a modified version of the FLCAS (Horwitz et al., 1986) for Turkish learners. The research revealed that there was a statistically significant decrease after the six- week lesson in students' anxiety. The authors concluded that this approach provided an anxiety-lowering environment with various enthusiastic activities.

Another study also supports the idea that classroom practice can change students' foreign language anxiety (Suwantarathip & Wichadee, 2010). A study was conducted at a Thai university to investigate if a classroom activity, which was designed to make students cooperate together through pair-work and group-work by sharing ideas and giving feedback to peers, would change the students' foreign language classroom anxiety and their proficiency in the target language. The study was conducted with students in a course which aimed to improve students' three main skills: reading, writing, and speaking. FLCAS and proficiency tests which measured students' reading and writing were done before and after the fourteen-week course. The results suggest that the students' language anxiety was reduced to a significant level and that their proficiency improved significantly after the course. The limitation of this study is that it is not a true experimental study that directly compared two settings: one in which students learned through cooperative learning and the other in which students learned through non-cooperative way. However, students who joined this study reported that they did not feel anxiety during the classroom and were able to be in a classroom without being tense. It is meaningful that learning through cooperative methods positively changed students' anxiety and proficiency, especially considering the fact that this class used to be one that

was so difficult that lower proficiency students could not keep up with it. This suggests that the teaching method, which not only included communicative elements but also promoted more student interaction, probably influenced students' anxiety and proficiency. As the above two studies show, recognizing students' anxiety would help teachers understand and design appropriate classroom practices.

**Gap Statement and the Purpose of the Study**

In sum, previous research has demonstrated that foreign language anxiety exists among Japanese students at various proficiency levels both in Japan and other countries where English is the primary language. Previous research also has shown that it is important to help reduce students' foreign language classroom anxiety. Although foreign language anxiety studies have been done extensively in Japan, their anxiety in a country where the language is used has not much been explored. However, considering the fact that anxiety could affect students' learning outcomes, the importance of foreign language anxiety among students who are in the country where the language is used should not be an exception. If staying for a certain amount of time in an L2 country improves the problem, students can go abroad to acquire the language. However, if those students still feel the same anxiety as students in Japan, there should be room for improvements in both classrooms before students go abroad and while in an English-speaking countries. Thus, this study aimed to investigate the language learning anxiety of Japanese students in the U.S. The results could have pedagogical implications for both college English instructors in Japan and North America who teach Japanese students. The following questions guided this study:

- What kinds of anxiety do Japanese undergraduate and graduate students in the U.S. experience?
- Is there a relationship between time in the U.S. and level of foreign language anxiety?

**Participants**

The participants in this study consisted of 151 Japanese undergraduate and graduate students studying in the U.S (male=58; female=92; undeclared=1). The average age of participants was 23 (*SD*= 4.96). Their current status as a student in the U.S. was as follows: Associate=2, Bachelor= 67, Master=26, Ph.D. = 13, Exchange Student= 41, ESL=2. Participants were majoring in a wide range of subjects such as business, biology, chemistry, computer science, engineering, communication, social science, arts, and humanities. Twenty-four participants (15.9%) were majoring in science, 20 participants (13.2%) were majoring in social sciences, 64 participants (42.4%) were majoring in humanities, 7 participants (4.6%) were majoring in arts, 25 participants (16.6%) were majoring in economics and business and 11 participants (7.3%) were double majors. The average length of residence in the U.S. was 27 months (*SD*= 38.29). Seventy-one participants (47.02%) answered that they had lived in a foreign country before their current time studying abroad. Fifty-six participants (37.9%) reported that they socialized with native English speakers seven days a week, 15 participants (9.93%) six days a week, 28 students (18.54%) five days a week, 12 participants (7.95%) four days a week, 12 participants (7.95%) three days a week, 13 participants (8.61%) twice a week, 12 participants (7.95%) once a week and 3 participants (1.99%) no socialization with native English speakers.

Participants were also asked about their self-perceived English proficiency. The scale used was based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages but one lowest scale was added for English learners of Japanese learners of English

(NHK Shuppan, n.d.). One participant (0.66%) reported that he or she was able to catch very simple expressions and tell the interlocutor about his or her name and feelings with basic words. Eight participants (5.30%) answered that they were able to understand basic expressions encountered in everyday life and conduct very simple communication. Nineteen participants (12.58%) declared that they were able to communicate with regard to topics in everyday life. Sixty participants (39.74%) expressed that they were able to understand familiar topics in their social life and simply explain their thoughts using simple language. Twenty-eight participants (18.54%) said that they were able to talk naturally about a wide variety of matters encountered in their social life and express opinions in a clear and detailed manner. Twenty-three participants (15.23%) answered that they were able to understand a wide range of complicated matters and make logical opinions as well as build a logical discussion by using an appropriate vocabulary according to a situation and a purpose. Twelve participants (7.95%) answered that they were able to understand almost all the matters without any difficulties and restate them logically. See Table 1 for a summary of participants' demographic information.

Table 1

*Participant's Demographic Information*

| Variable | N | Category | Number | Percentage |
|----------|-----|----------|--------|------------|
| Gender | 151 | Male | 58 | 38.41% |
| | | Female | 92 | 60.93% |
| | | Undeclared | 1 | 0.66% |
| | | | | |
| Degree | 151 | Associate | 2 | 1.32% |
| | | Bachelor | 67 | 44.37% |
| | | Master | 26 | 17.22% |
| | | Ph.D. | 13 | 8.61% |
| | | Exchange | 41 | 27.15& |
| | | ESL | 2 | 1.32% |

| Major | 151 | Social Sciences | 20 | 13.2% |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Humanities | 64 | 42.4% |
| | | Arts | 7 | 4.6% |
| | | Science | 24 | 15.9% |
| | | Business, Economics | 25 | 16.6% |
| | | Double Major | 11 | 7.3% |
| | | | | |
| Previous Foreign Experience | 151 | Yes | 71 | 47.02% |
| | | No | 80 | 52.98% |
| | | | | |
| Socialization with Native Speakers | 151 | No socialization a week | 3 | 1.99% |
| | | Once a week | 12 | 7.95% |
| | | Twice a week | 13 | 8.61% |
| | | Three times a week | 12 | 7.95% |
| | | Four times a week | 12 | 7.95% |
| | | Five times a week | 28 | 18.54% |
| | | Six times a week | 15 | 9.93% |
| | | Seven times a week | 56 | 37.90% |
| | | | | |
| Self Perceived English Proficiency | 151 | 1. I am able to catch a very simple expression and to tell the interlocutor about my name and feelings with basic words. | 1 | 0.66% |
| | | 2. I am able to understand basic expressions encountered in everyday life and to conduct a very simple communication. | 8 | 5.30% |
| | | 3. I am able to communicate with regard to familiar topics in everyday life. | 19 | 12.58% |
| | | 4. I am able to understand familiar topics in social life and simply explain my thoughts and its reasons by using simple language. | 60 | 39.74% |

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| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 5. I am able to talk naturally about a wide variety of matters encountered in social life and express opinions in a clear and detailed manner. | 28 | 18.54% | |
| 6. I am able to understand a wide range of complicated matters and make a logical opinion as well as build a logical discussion by using an appropriate vocabulary according to a situation and a purpose. | 23 | 15.23% | |
| 7. I am able to understand almost all the matters without any difficulties and restate them logically. | 12 | 7.95% | |

## Instrument

The instrument used for this study was a modified version of the Foreign

Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986), which

was mentioned above. The questions generally reflected communication apprehension,

test-anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation in a foreign language classroom. However,

there are some items that do not belong to the above three categories. The original

questions consisted of 33 questions; however, in this study, item 26 in the original

FLCAS, which asked if students felt more nervous in a language class than in other

courses, was eliminated because all the courses the target students took were in English

in the U.S. Therefore, the survey consisted of 32 items in the current study. In addition,

modifications of some of the words were made in order to make the survey appropriate to

the target students who used the foreign language not in a foreign language classroom, but in a country where the language is used. This change was because the FLCAS was originally made to measure students' anxiety in foreign language classrooms where the dominant language outside the classroom was not the language students were learning. The following is the detailed description of the modifications made.

First, the terms "foreign language class" and "language class" in the original questions of FLCAS were changed to "class conducted in English." Such a change is seen in items 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 13, 16, 17, 18, 20, 22, 25, 27, and 28 in the original instrument. Second, the term 'foreign language' was changed to "English" in this survey. This applies to items 4, 24 and 31 in the original instrument. Third, the term "language teacher" in the original instrument was changed to 'my teacher.' This applies to items 19, 29 and 33 in the original instrument. Fourth, the term "the other students" was changed to "the other Japanese students." This applies to items 7 and 23 in the original questions. Finally, the question "the more I study for a language test, the more confused I get" in the item 21 in the original questions was changed to "a test given in English."

Participants were asked to answer each item by using a five-point Likert scale -- strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), neutral (3), agree (4) and strongly agree (5). The survey was translated into Japanese by the author in order to gather more responses from a variety of participants. The survey was conducted and gathered through Survey Monkey, an online survey machine. At the beginning of the survey, they were required to read and agree to an informed consent stating that they agreed to participate, were under no obligation to do so, and could withdraw at any time. Only those who agreed to this

consent proceeded to the demographic profiles and survey forms. See Tables 2 and 3 for

copies of the English and Japanese versions of the survey.

Table 2

*Modified Foreign Language Anxiety Scale used in this study.*

| Item | Survey items |
|------|--------------|
| 1 | I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my class conducted in English. |
| 2 | I don't worry about making mistakes in class conducted in English. |
| 3 | I tremble when I know that I'm being called on in class conducted in English. |
| 4 | It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in English. |
| 5 | It wouldn't bother me at all to take more English language classes. |
| 6 | During class conducted in English, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course. |
| 7 | I keep thinking that the other Japanese students are better at languages than I am. |
| 8 | I am usually at ease during tests in my class conducted in English. |
| 9 | I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in my class conducted in English. |
| 10 | I worry about the consequences of failing my class conducted in English. |
| 11 | I don't understand why some people get so upset over classes conducted in English. |
| 12 | In classes conducted in English, I can get so nervous I forget things I know. |
| 13 | It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in classes conducted in English. |
| 14 | I would not be nervous speaking the foreign language with native speakers. |
| 15 | I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting. |
| 16 | Even if I am well prepared for classes conducted in English, I feel anxious about it. |
| 17 | I often feel like not going to my classes conducted in English. |
| 18 | I feel confident when I speak in classes conducted in English. |
| 19 | I am afraid that my teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make. |
| 20 | I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in classes conducted in English. |
| 21 | The more I study for a test given in English, the more confused I get. |
| 22 | I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for classes conducted in English. |
| 23 | I always feel that the other Japanese students speak the foreign language better than I do. |
| 24 | I feel very self-conscious about speaking the foreign language in front of other students. |
| 25 | Classes conducted in English moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind. |
| 26 | I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my classes conducted in English. |
| 27 | When I'm on my way to classes conducted in English, I feel very sure and relaxed. |
| 28 | I get nervous when I don't understand every word my teacher says. |
| 29 | I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak a foreign language. |
| 30 | I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak the foreign |

language.
| | |
|---|---|
| 31 | I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of the foreign language. |
| 32 | I get nervous when my teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance. |

Table 3

*Modified Foreign Language Anxiety Scale used in this study. (Japanese ver.).*

| Item | Survey items |
|---|---|
| 1 | 英語で行われる授業で、自分が発言をする際に、自分が言っていることに対してほとんど自信がない。 |
| 2 | 英語で行われる授業で、間違いをすることを気にしない。 |
| 3 | 英語で行われる授業で、自分があてられる際に怖くて震える。 |
| 4 | 英語で先生が言っていることが理解できない時に、恐怖心を感じる。 |
| 5 | より多くの英語のクラス(英語自体を習う為の授業)を履修することは決して問題ではない。 |
| 6 | 英語で行われる授業中に、授業とは関係のないことを考えていることがある。 |
| 7 | 他の日本人学生の方が外国語ができると、常に思っている。 |
| 8 | 英語で行われる授業のテストでは、たいてい心配なく気楽に感じている。 |
| 9 | 英語で行われる授業で、事前の準備なしにその場で話さなければいけなくなった時、混乱し始めてしまう。 |
| 10 | 英語で行われる授業を落としてしまうのではないかと心配になる。 |
| 11 | どうして英語で行われる授業でとても動転してしまう人がいるのか、理解できない。 |
| 12 | 英語で行われる授業で、とても緊張してしまう為に、知っていることを忘れてしまう。 |
| 13 | 英語で行われる授業で、自発的に答えることはとても恥ずかしい。 |
| 14 | 英語のネイティブスピーカーと話をしても緊張しない。 |
| 15 | 先生が自分の言った事を訂正した内容が理解できないと、あたふたしてしまう。 |
| 16 | 英語で行われる授業の準備を事前にとてもよくしていった時でも、不安に感じる。 |
| 17 | 英語で行われる授業に、行きたくないと感じることがよくある。 |
| 18 | 英語で行われる授業で話す時に、自信がある。 |
| 19 | 自分の先生が、自分がした間違いを全て訂正しようとするのではないかと不安を感じる。 |
| 20 | 英語で行われる授業で自分の名前が呼ばれる時に、心臓がどきどきする。 |
| 21 | 英語で行われる試験に向けて勉強すればするほど、混乱してくる。 |
| 22 | 英語で行われる授業に向けてたくさん準備をしなければいけないとプレッシャーを感じることはない。 |
| 23 | いつも、他の日本人学生の方が外国語を自分よりも上手に話すと感じている。 |
| 24 | 他の学生の前で英語を話す時に、他人の目を気にし過ぎてしまう。 |
| 25 | 英語で行われる授業は進むのが速く、おいて行かれるのではないかと心配に |

なる。

26　英語で行われる授業で話をする時に、緊張し、混乱してしまう。

27　英語で行われる授業に向かっている時、とても自信を持っているし、リラックスしている。

28　英語で行われる授業で、先生が言っている使う一語一句が分らないと、緊張する。

29　外国語を話す際に知らなければならないルールの数に圧倒されてしまう。

30　私が英語を話す時に、他の学生に笑われるのではないかと心配になる。

31　私は、ネイティブスピーカーの中にいても、特に問題なく気楽に感じるだろう。

32　先生が、私が事前に準備していなかった質問を聞いてきた際に、緊張する。

**Procedure**

The author sent her friends an email to invite them and other Japanese international students at North American universities to participate in the research. The email had a link to the survey on Survey Monkey, an online survey form. From that, through word of mouth, the email was forwarded to Japanese international students in the U.S. and samples were gathered. It took about twenty minutes for the participants to finish the demographic profile and the survey. The data was gathered through the end of November 2014 to the early February 2015.

**Analysis**

Arithmetic means and standard deviations were tabulated in order to see which items gave students the most anxiety and least anxiety. Correlations between items and length of time in the U.S. were then tabulated. Because of non-linear distributions, Spearman's rho was used to do this (Shavelson, 1996). In addition, the data was analyzed by classifying them into the three categories—communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety— according to the discussion of foreign language classroom anxiety types by Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope (1986) and 'others' that do not belong to the above three categories. Although they think that the FLCAS is a reflection

of the above three categories, they did not assign a category to each question specifically in the study. Therefore, in the attempt to delineate students' anxiety, the categorization of each item was done by the author.

**Results**

To answer the first question-- *What kinds of anxiety do Japanese undergraduate and graduate students in the U.S. experience?*—the mean of each item and standard deviation were tabulated. As shown in Table 4, the top ten high mean scores are as follows: item 6 "During class conducted in English, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course" (*M*=3.50; *SD*=1.01) (others); item 5 "It wouldn't bother me at all to take more English language classes" (*M*=3.34; *SD*=1.21) (others); item 32 "I get nervous when my teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance" (*M*=3.29; *SD*= 1.15) (communication apprehension); item 14 "I would not be nervous speaking the foreign language with native speakers" (*M*=3.18; *SD*=1.32) (communication apprehension); item 9 "I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in my class conducted in English" (*M*=3.15; *SD*= 1.22) (communication apprehension); item 31 "I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of the foreign language" (*M*=2.91; *SD*= 1.29) (communication apprehension); item 15 "I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting" (*M*=2.89; *SD*=1.05); item 1 "I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my class conducted in English" (*M*=2.88; *SD*=1.18) (communication apprehension); item 8 "I am usually at ease during tests in my class conducted in English" (*M*=2.86; *SD*= 1.21) (test anxiety); and item 20 "I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in classes conducted in English" (*M*=2.85; *SD*= 1.24) (communication apprehension).

The results show that Japanese international students do not necessarily have uncomfortable feelings with being in a classroom conducted in English (items 15, 1 & 20), considering that these means were less than 3.0. Furthermore, they seem to have

little problem with being around native speakers (items 14 & 31). They also do not appear to be suffering from strong test anxiety, either (item 8). However, it seems they feel a certain anxiety when asked to speak on the spot during class (items 32 &9). They also become absent-minded during class time, although the reason is not clear from this survey (item 6). Under these conditions, it seems that they are positive about learning English (item 5).

On the other hand, the bottom ten items are as follows: item 21 "The more I study for a test given in English, the more confused I get" ($M$=1.83; $SD$= 0.96) (test anxiety); item 11 "I don't understand why some people get so upset over classes conducted in English" ($M$=1.92; $SD$= 0.96) (communication apprehension); item 19 "I am afraid that my teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make" ($M$=1.96; $SD$= 0.83) (fear of negative evaluation); item 28 "I get nervous when I don't understand every word my teacher says" ($M$= 2.07; $SD$= 0.97) (communication apprehension); item 17 "I often feel like not going to my classes conducted in English" ($M$=2.11; $SD$= 1.20) (communication apprehension); item 29 "I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak a foreign language" ($M$= 2.26; $SD$= 1.06) (others); item 10 "I worry about the consequences of failing my class conducted in English" ($M$=2.40; $SD$= 1.24) (test anxiety); item 30 "I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak the foreign language" ($M$= 2.40; $SD$= 1.21) (fear of negative evaluation); item 16 "Even if I am well prepared for classes conducted in English, I feel anxious about it" ($M$= 2.44; $SD$= 1.18) (communication apprehension); and item 3 "I tremble when I know that I'm being called on in class conducted in English" ($M$=2.47; $SD$= 1.13) (communication apprehension).

The results show that students do not seem to have strong anxieties in communicating in an English-speaking environment (items 28, 17, 16 & 3) and to be worried about how the others view their production (items 19 & 30). They are also not concerned about tests (items 21 & 10). Furthermore, the rules of English are not a problem for them (item 29). Nevertheless, they still understand why others would feel discomfort in an English-speaking environment (item 11).

Both the top and bottom 10 items suggest that students feel comfortable in an English-speaking environment—including both comprehension and performance-- except for some classroom situations where they are asked to speak without previous preparation. It is worth noting that students do not feel strong fear of negative evaluation and test anxiety. Students in the U.S. seem to be only concerned with their own production during a particular situation when they are required to give their opinions on the spot during class. In sum, it appears that they are in an ideal learning environment where they do not possess unnecessarily-felt anxieties.

Table 4

*Summary of Students' Anxiety*

| Item | Survey items (*N*=151) | *M* | *SD* |
|------|------------------------|-----|------|
| 6 | During class conducted in English, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course. | 3.50 | 1.01 |
| 5 | It wouldn't bother me at all to take more English language classes. | 3.34 | 1.21 |
| 32 | I get nervous when my teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance. | 3.29 | 1.15 |
| 14 | I would not be nervous speaking the foreign language with native speakers. | 3.18 | 1.32 |
| 9 | I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in my class conducted in English. | 3.15 | 1.22 |

| 31 | I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of the foreign language. | 2.91 | 1.29 |
|----|----|----|----|
| 15 | I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting. | 2.89 | 1.05 |
| 1 | I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my class conducted in English. | 2.88 | 1.18 |
| 8 | I am usually at ease during tests in my class conducted in English. | 2.86 | 1.21 |
| 20 | I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in classes conducted in English. | 2.85 | 1.24 |
| 22 | I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for classes conducted in English. | 2.85 | 1.24 |
| 2 | I don't worry about making mistakes in class conducted in English. | 2.83 | 1.24 |
| 27 | When I'm on my way to classes conducted in English, I feel very sure and relaxed. | 2.80 | 1.11 |
| 24 | I feel very self-conscious about speaking English in front of other students. | 2.78 | 1.27 |
| 26 | I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my classes conducted in English. | 2.77 | 1.20 |
| 7 | I keep thinking that the other Japanese students are better at languages than I am. | 2.69 | 1.16 |
| 23 | I always feel that the other Japanese students speak the foreign language better than I do. | 2.67 | 1.16 |
| 25 | Classes conducted in English moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind. | 2.66 | 1.21 |
| 4 | It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in English. | 2.65 | 1.22 |
| 12 | In classes conducted in English, I can get so nervous I forget things I know. | 2.63 | 1.15 |
| 13 | It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in classes conducted in English. | 2.60 | 1.27 |
| 18 | I feel confident when I speak in classes conducted in English. | 2.54 | 1.08 |
| 3 | I tremble when I know that I'm being called on in class conducted in English. | 2.47 | 1.13 |
| 16 | Even if I am well prepared for classes conducted in English, I feel anxious about it. | 2.44 | 1.18 |
| 30 | I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak the foreign language. | 2.40 | 1.21 |
| 10 | I worry about the consequences of failing my class conducted in English. | 2.40 | 1.24 |

| 29 | I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak a foreign language. | 2.26 | 1.06 |
|----|---|---|---|
| 17 | I often feel like not going to my classes conducted in English. | 2.11 | 1.20 |
| 28 | I get nervous when I don't understand every word my teacher says. | 2.07 | 0.97 |
| 19 | I am afraid that my teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make. | 1.96 | 0.83 |
| 11 | I don't understand why some people get so upset over classes conducted in English. | 1.92 | 0.96 |
| 21 | The more I study for a test given in English, the more confused I get. | 1.83 | 0.96 |

To answer the second question-- *Is there a relationship between time in the U.S. and level of foreign language anxiety?*—the Spearman's rho was used to correlate length of time in the U.S. (item number 39) and all the survey items. Significant correlations between length of time in the U.S. and items 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 10, 12, 14, 16, 17, 18, 21, 24, 25, 26, 27, 30 and 31 were seen (*p*<.00). Among them, positive correlations were seen with item 27 "When I'm on my way to classes conducted in English, I feel very sure and relaxed" (.45) (communication apprehension); item 8 "I am usually at ease during tests in my class conducted in English" (.36) (test anxiety); item 31 "I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of the foreign language" (.34) (communication apprehension); item 14 "I would not be nervous speaking the foreign language with native speakers" (.30) (communication apprehension); item 18 "I feel confident when I speak in classes conducted in English" (.26) (communication apprehension); and item 2 "I don't worry about making mistakes in class conducted in English" (.23) (fear of negative evaluation).

On the other hand, negative correlations between lengths of time in the U.S. and items were seen in item 30 "I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I

speak the foreign language" (-.22) (fear of negative evaluation); item 21 "The more I study for a test given in English, the more confused I get" (-.22) (test anxiety); item 24 "I feel very self-conscious about speaking the foreign language in front of other students" (-.24) (communication apprehension); item 26 "I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my classes conducted in English" (-.25) (communication apprehension); item 17 "I often feel like not going to my classes conducted in English" (-.26) (communication apprehension); item 3 "I tremble when I know that I'm being called on in class conducted in English" (-.26) (communication apprehension); item 10 "I worry about the consequences of failing my class conducted in English" (-.27) (test anxiety); item 9 "I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in my class conducted in English" (-.27) (communication apprehension); item 4 "It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in English" (-.27) (communication apprehension); item 16 "Even if I am well prepared for classes conducted in English, I feel anxious about it" (-.32) (communication apprehension); item 25 "Classes conducted in English moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind" (-.33) (fear of negative evaluation); item 12 "In classes conducted in English, I can get so nervous I forget things I know" (-.34) (communication apprehension); and item 1 "I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my class conducted in English" (-.35) (communication apprehension).

In sum, anxieties are reduced in all the three categories—communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety—as students' length of time in the U.S. increases. In other words, first, the more students spend time in the U.S., the less anxiety they have in interacting with native speakers (items 14 &31), in speaking itself and how others perceive their utterances (items 2 & 30), in taking tests and in course

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grade (items 8, 10, & 21), in attending class (items 17 & 27),  in speaking in the

classroom setting (items 1, 3, 9, 12, 16, 18, 24 & 26 ), in not understanding what a

teacher says (item 4), and in catching up with a class (item 25).  To conclude, although

the results do not show strong correlations, they do suggest that the more time Japanese

international students spend in the U.S., the more comfortable they become with being in

an English-speaking environment.

Table 5

*Correlations between time in the U.S. and level of foreign language anxiety*

| Foreign Language Anxiety Item | Strength of Correlation |
|---|---|
| 27  When I'm on my way to classes conducted in English, I feel very sure and relaxed. | $r_s$ (151)=.45, p=.00 |
| 8  I am usually at ease during tests in my class conducted in English. | $r_s$ (151)=.36, p=.00 |
| 31  I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of the foreign language. | $r_s$ (151)=.34, p=.00 |
| 14  I would not be nervous speaking the foreign language with native speakers. | $r_s$ (151)=.30, p=.00 |
| 18  I feel confident when I speak in classes conducted in English. | $r_s$ (151)=.26, p=.00 |
| 2  I don't worry about making mistakes in class conducted in English. | $r_s$ (151)=.23, p=.00 |
| 6  During class conducted in English, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course. | $r_s$ (151)=.08, p= .33 |
| 22  I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for classes conducted in English. | $r_s$ (151)=.06, p=.47 |
| 11  I don't understand why some people get so upset over classes conducted in English. | $r_s$ (151)=.03, p=.68 |
| 5  It wouldn't bother me at all to take more English language classes. | $r_s$ (151)=-.01, p=.87 |
| 32  I get nervous when my teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance. | $r_s$ (151)=-.10, p= .22 |
| 29  I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak a foreign language. | $r_s$ (151)=-.11, p=.19 |

| 23 | I always feel that the other Japanese students speak the foreign language better than I do. | $r_s$ (151)=-.12, p=.13 |
|----|---|---|
| 7 | I keep thinking that the other Japanese students are better at languages than I am. | $r_s$ (151)=-.13, p=.11 |
| 19 | I am afraid that my teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make. | $r_s$ (151)= -.14, p=.08 |
| 28 | I get nervous when I don't understand every word my teacher says. | $r_s$ (151)=-.15, p=.07 |
| 13 | It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in classes conducted in English. | $r_s$ (151)=-.18, p=.02 |
| 15 | I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting. | $r_s$ (151)=-.18, p=.03 |
| 20 | I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in classes conducted in English. | $r_s$ (151)=-.20, p=.01 |
| 30 | I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak the foreign language. | $r_s$ (151)=-.22, p=.00 |
| 21 | The more I study for a test given in English, the more confused I get. | $r_s$ (151)=-.22, p=.00 |
| 24 | I feel very self-conscious about speaking the foreign language in front of other students. | $r_s$ (151)=-.24, p=.00 |
| 26 | I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my classes conducted in English. | $r_s$ (151)=-.25, p=.00 |
| 17 | I often feel like not going to my classes conducted in English. | $r_s$ (151)=-.26, p=.00 |
| 3 | I tremble when I know that I'm being called on in class conducted in English. | $r_s$ (151)=-.26, p=.00 |
| 10 | I worry about the consequences of failing my class conducted in English. | $r_s$ (151)=-.27, p=.00 |
| 9 | I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in my class conducted in English. | $r_s$ (151)=-.27, p=.00 |
| 4 | It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in English. | $r_s$ (151)=-.27, p=.00 |
| 16 | Even if I am well prepared for classes conducted in English, I feel anxious about it. | $r_s$ (151)=-.32, p=.00 |
| 25 | Classes conducted in English moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind. | $r_s$ (151)=-.33, p=.00 |
| 12 | In classes conducted in English, I can get so nervous I forget things I know. | $r_s$ (151)=-.34, p=.00 |
| 1 | I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my class conducted in English. | $r_s$ (151)=-.35, p=.00 |

**Discussion**

**Anxiety Studies of Japanese Students**

In the current study, there are some differences from the previous studies conducted with Japanese students who learn English in Japan. First, a comparison of the current results with Burden's (2004) shows that students in the current study have less anxiety overall compared to students in Japan. Although Burden's study is not the latest information on Japanese students' anxiety within Japan, comparing the two result gives a clue to students' state with regard to communicating in English. First, it seems that students in the current study have less anxiety. The results showed four items that revealed students' confidence with being in an English-speaking environment or using English (items 5, 14, 31, and 8) ranked in the top 10 items, whereas there is no such confidence found in the top 10 items in the Burden's study. On the contrary, there are five items that show confidence (items 8, 14, 22, 27, and 31) ranked in the bottom 10 in Burden's study. In addition, three of the top 10 items in Burden's study are in the bottom 10 items of the students of the current study. In other words, although students in the current study do not show strong anxiety for "I tremble when I know that I am going to be called on in English class (item 3) (communication apprehension)," "I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak English (item 29) (others)," and "I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak English (item 30) (fear of negative evaluation)," students in Burden's study showed strong anxiety for them. Besides, students in Burden's study showed three fear of negative evaluation items (items 13, 23 & 30) in the top 10, whereas students in the current study did not show any of the fear of negative evaluation items in the top 10. These

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comparisons show that students in the current study are more comfortable with an English-speaking environment, while students in Burden's study were worried about evaluations from others. Although these results need further consideration, they might be because students in the U.S. have learned others do not care about their own utterances or they feel the need to speak up instead of not expressing themselves and fearing how the others would see their utterances while they live in the environment where they need English. Finally, although students in both studies show speaking anxiety (items 1 & 9), the results suggest that students in the Burden's study felt more of it.

Also, students in the current study have less anxiety than those in Williams and Andrade's (2008) study that investigated Japanese students' anxiety provoking situations in English. They identified anxiety provoking situations among Japanese college students who learned English mostly as tasks related to processing and output. Looking at the results of the current study, there are anxieties pertaining to output and processing such as "I get nervous when my teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance (item 32)," "I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in my class conducted in English (item 9)," "I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting (item 15)," and "I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my class conducted in English (item 1)." However, only the first two show averages of more than 3.0. Therefore, it seems that students in the current study do not have as strong output and processing related anxieties as students in Japan.

The above discussion suggests that students in the U.S. have less anxiety compared to students in Japan. Then, the question is what influences the way students feel anxiety. The important finding of this study is that it clarified the correlation between

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students' length of stay in the U.S. and their anxiety level. It is logical that the longer

students stay, the less anxiety they would feel because they become used to the

environment and their English proficiency improves. However, this contrasts with the

previous research by Osboe et al (2007), which found that there was no correlation

between the overseas experience and speaking anxiety, as well as Matsuda and Gobel's

(2004) research which found that overseas experience has an influence but the length

does not. These differences from the current study could be due to the different lengths of

the stay the students have from the other two studies. The length of stay in an English-

speaking environment is the longest (average 27 months) in this study, the average length

of stay in Osboe et al's (2007) research was not clarified but included two weeks

experience as overseas experience, and the average in Matsuda & Gobel's (2004) study

was 97 days. From these differences, it seems that short stays would not strongly change

the anxiety students have. It is unknown when the threshold point is in terms of the way

students feel less anxiety, but there should be a point when students start feeling more

relaxed and less anxiety. However, this would be affected by various factors. It is

expected that students who come to the U.S. would feel the similar anxiety pattern until

they come to a certain point where they feel more comfortable in an English-speaking

environment. Future studies should investigate this issue.

**Implications for Teachers and government officials in Japan**

Based on the results of this study, the ideas of promoting CLT and studying

abroad seem to be a great move to promote higher proficiency among Japanese students.

However, there is a need to consider students' foreign language anxiety because it exists

among Japanese students who learn English. The current study suggests a significant

relationship between anxiety and length of stay in the U.S., students' perceived proficiency, and socialization. Studying abroad would probably reduce the level of students' foreign language anxiety. However, it is important to note that the average length of the stay in the U.S. in the current study is 27 months, which is longer than previous studies. Considering exchange students usually do not stay longer than one year, it is difficult to state with certainty that going to study abroad would reduce foreign language anxieties.

In order for students to make the most out of their study abroad experience, it is important to get rid of unnecessary anxieties they feel in classrooms so that they can learn the language in an optimal environment where they can develop their language skills before they leave Japan. Based on the current study, reducing fear of negative evaluation seems to be the area classroom teachers should work on in Japan because this type is only seen in classrooms in Japan, not in the U.S.. Second, since there is a correlation among students' foreign language anxiety and their perceived language proficiency, as well as their socialization with native speakers, it is important to increase both perceived language proficiency and frequency of interaction with native speakers. This is what classroom teachers who implement CLT need to take into consideration.

In order to get rid of fear of negative evaluation, it is important to make classroom activities more cooperative by introducing pair work and group work, as well as decreasing the number of situations where students could be spotlighted and easily judged. Since students reported teachers to be the cause of their anxiety rather than themselves (Williams & Andrade, 2008), it is important to reflect on the teacher-student relationship so that the classroom becomes more comfortable. A shift from a teacher-

centered classroom to a more student-involved classroom will be necessary to make it happen. In addition, in order to increase interaction with native speakers, considering it would reduce students' anxiety of communicating in English and in the long run help them become more proficient in English, it is important to make use of native-speaking teachers, which Japan has already introduced. Although Japanese teachers of English see native English teachers favorably (Sutherland, 2012), research suggests that there are differences among teachers about how successful they are in working with native English teachers (Fujimoto-Adamson, 2010). Along with this, Japanese teachers of English see CLT favorably (Nishiono, 2008); however, they see obstacles of implementing CLT. Those obstacles include teachers' educational background (Cook, 2010; Nishino & Watanabe, 2008), lack of teacher training (both pre-service and in-service) (Lamie, 2000; Nishino 2008), lack of teachers' English proficiency as well as lack of confidence in their English (Nishino & Watanabe, 2008), external factors such as the classroom size (Nishino, 2008), and the nature of entrance examination (Lamie, 2000; Nishino, 2008). These obstacles would be impediments to both effective classrooms with native English teachers and CLT. As it has been argued, the ideal English classroom in Japan, where students feel lower anxiety with an effective cooperation with native English teachers instead of a teacher-centered classroom, will look very differently from the traditional Japanese classroom. For this reason, training teachers in CLT seems to be the most important move.  There is a lot of information available for a successful CLT; however, having the knowledge and doing it are different things.

**Anxiety Studies of International Students**

The biggest difference between Japanese students in Japan and in the U.S. is that the latter experience not only linguistic but also cultural challenges. Therefore, it is important to examine the acculturation aspect of international students since the attitude toward the host culture influences students' learning experience (Herrera, Murray & Cabral, 2007). With regard to international students' anxieties, there is more research on acculturation than linguistics in the U.S.

First, Wilton and Constantine (2003) found a relationship between international students' distress and the length of stay in the U.S. They pointed out that students feel less distress as their time in the U.S. increases. They mention that this is probably because of the social relationships or supports that students who reside in the U.S. longer have built. Another study also reveals that the longer students stay in the U.S., the more socialization they have (Trice, 2004). The relationship between the length of stay in the U.S. and distress is the same with students' foreign language anxiety found in the current study. It is probably a truism, but students would be able to feel less anxious both linguistically and emotionally as time passes.

Second, other research (Sümer, Poyrazli, & Grahame, 2008; Yeh, & Inose, 2003) shows that there is a relationship between students' acculturative distress and their perceived English proficiency, as well as students' acculturative distress and their sense of social connectedness. In other words, students with higher perceived English proficiency tend to experience less acculturative distress, while students with lower perceived English proficiency tend to go through higher acculturative distress. This is similar to the finding in the current study that there are significant correlations between self-perceived proficiency and foreign language anxiety level (item 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10,

12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31 and 32). Similarly, students who feel more connection to others socially are less likely to feel acculturative distress, while students who feel less connection to others are more likely to suffer from acculturative distress. In the same vein, this is similar to the finding in the current study that there are significant correlations between students' socialization with native English speakers and foreign language anxiety levels (item 1, 8, 12, 13, 14, 18, 20, 24, 26, 27, 29, 30, and 31). Furthermore, previous research suggests that international students in the U.S. who have more social interaction with non-American students tend to have lower self-perceived proficiency (Sümer, Poyrazli, & Grahame, 2008). Considering the importance of both having lower acculturation distress and having lower foreign language anxiety for international students' fruitful life in the U.S., it seems that raising self-perceived proficiency and having more socialization with native speakers are key. Although further research needs to be done to correlate students' self-perceived English proficiency and socialization in the language anxiety field too, there is a possibility that having higher self-perceived English proficiency could lead to socialization or vice versa.

There are also cultural factors related to students' acculturation progresses (Sodowsky & Plake, 1992; Yeh & Inose, 2003). Yeh and Inose (2003) pointed out that international students from European countries feel less distress compared to students who are from other parts of the world in their research in the U.S. This is thought to be because it is easier for European students to fit in to American culture, which is built on White, European values. Along with this, the reason could also be attributed to the fact that they face less prejudice, racism and discrimination (Sodowsky & Plake, 1992; Yeh & Inose, 2003). Similarly, research has found that Southeast and East Asian students have

the least socialization with American students after African and Middle Eastern students and are concerned about the fact that they do not have enough interaction with them (Trice, 2004). For that reason, there is the need for external help for students of non-European backgrounds to be more comfortable with the host culture. Yeh and Inose's (2002) research on the acculturation problems of East Asian international students shows that they experience difficulties related to communication derived from language barriers, different values and customs, interpersonal problems and academic or career issues. They also found that more than half of the Japanese students in this study experienced interpersonal problems. They attribute this reason to the different idea of self in Japanese context from Western context. That is to say, the Japanese idea of self changes depending on groups a person belongs to and thus changes depending on a situation in order to keep a harmonious relationship with others, which contrasts with Western idea of self. It is worth noting because only 20 to 25 % of the Chinese and Korean students mentioned that they had interpersonal problems. As such, although this study focused on junior high and high school students, interpersonal problems could be thought to be something that Japanese college students in the U.S. might suffer from, too.

Considering both students' linguistic and cultural anxieties derived from lower self-perceived English proficiency, less social connection, prejudice, and interpersonal problems, Japanese students would appreciate both cultural and linguistic supports, especially upon arriving in the U.S. This is because data suggests that students' adjustment does not change drastically after the second year (Andrade, 2006) and because not every international student stays more than one year. However, it is reported that there is a tendency that Asian college students do not seek professional help for their

personal problems (although they seek professional help for academic and career reasons) (Cheng, Leong, & Geist, 1993). Along with this, teenage Japanese students in the U.S. have a stronger tendency to seek social rather than professional support in order to cope with difficulties compared to their Chinese and Korean counterparts (Yeh & Inose, 2002). Therefore, it is important to think about what institutions could offer to the population by taking a consideration into Japanese students' traits.

**Implications for Teachers and University Administrators in the U.S.**

Considering the situation of Japanese students described in the previous part, there are three possible countermeasures to their cultural and linguistic adjustments. However, those supports need to be provided especially at the beginning of their life in the U.S. because data suggest that the first year is the most effective in making students adjust to the host society, as noted earlier (Andrade, 2006). First, previous research shows the effectiveness of peer programs, which is when an international student is matched with an American student in order to promote their social adjustment (Abe, Talbot &Gellhoed, 1998; Andrade, 2006; Trice, 2004). A study done by Trice (2004) suggests that students who were paired with an American student showed higher scores in every field in an instrument which measured academic adjustment, social adjustment, personal and emotional adjustment, and institutional attachment adjustment. Introducing peer groups would help Japanese students feel more socially connected, which would play an important part in increasing acculturation and English proficiency. In addition to matching students, introducing extracurricular activities also has the possibility of enhancing Japanese students' involvement in the society and thus alleviating acculturation distress. Research suggests that students who are more actively committed

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to extracurricular activities while they study abroad showed a higher degree of satisfaction than those who were less actively involved (Toyokawa & Toyokawa, 2002). Connecting extracurricular activities to students' academic interests so that students could establish a bridge between their personal life and the new society is also recommended. In addition to decreasing the cultural barriers Japanese students face with American culture by increasing actual interactions, it would be beneficial to educate Japanese students about the cultural differences between Japan and the U.S. A possible way is to offer workshops on various topics, including cultural differences and how to cope with them (Trice, 2004). Along with this, an outreach program for professional counseling services could be one that an institution could offer (Andrade, 2006). However, in promoting counseling services to Japanese students, it should be noted that there is a need to make the service look more approachable because previous research suggests that they are reluctant to ask for help.

In sum, Japanese students would benefit from supports such as peer programs, extracurricular activities, direct training or education on cultural differences and counseling services. They would help students tackle difficulties faced in a new environment, as well as give them more opportunities to use English outside the classroom.

## Limitations and Conclusions

In spite of these data-supported recommendations, it is unknown if the data in the current study represents the international students' experience in the whole U.S., given that the U.S. is a very large country. The current study did not consider how results differed according to region, which future studies should consider. In addition, it would be more insightful to conduct follow-up interviews in order to know why students feel specific anxieties. For example, the reasons behind the results for the item which displayed the most anxiety "During class conducted in English, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course", are not known. Since this item was ranked in the bottom ten items for the students in Japan according to another study (Burden, 2004), it is of interest why this shift has occurred.

Finally, the findings from this study suggest that there is a significant correlation between students' foreign language anxieties and the length of stay in the U.S. However, even though not all the students are able to stay long enough for this to happen, they should not be ignored. It is important for English instructors and university administrators to help students with being adapted to a new culture. On the other hand, it is important for students in Japan to develop their English proficiency so they could soon be adapted to a new culture with fewer difficulties. However, in order to make it happen, a paradigm shift in English classrooms, from a teacher-centered to more students-centered, will be required. Further research that includes interviews and pre and post tests would be beneficial to know how students' anxiety reduces as time passes. That would give us more understanding of what teachers both in Japan and the U.S. could do to enhance students' language proficiency as much as possible.

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